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**HERSETH SANDLIN ANNOUNCES \$16 MILLION GRANT TO REBUILD STATE BRANCH LINE FROM MITCHELL TO CHAMBERLAIN**

**Washington, DC (October 15, 2010)-** Today, U.S. Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin announced a \$16 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to rebuild a state owned branch line from Mitchell, South Dakota to Chamberlain, South Dakota. The end result of this project will allow the transportation of agricultural commodities in a more efficient manner, ultimately resulting in reduced transportation costs, less wear on local roads, less fuel consumed, additional long term jobs, higher income for area farmers, development of storage and transportation facilities along the branch line and direct jobs resulting from the construction project.

“This funding is imperative to the rail industry in South Dakota. Rebuilding the branch line between Mitchell and Chamberlain will bring jobs to the area, and support continued economic development. In addition, it will allow our producers to ship their goods at a lower cost, thus helping the local farmer and rancher,” said Herseth Sandlin.

The funding is provided through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Fiscal Year 2010 National Infrastructure Investments or TIGER II Discretionary Grants Program: Capital Grants.

Currently, the existing branch line is in poor condition and a very limited amount of product is shipped on this line. Investors are reluctant to build new elevators or improve grain handling facilities on the line because of the slow train speed and poor track conditions. Most of the grain that could be shipped via rail is either trucked to its final destination or trucked a longer distance to an elevator on another railroad, which increases costs for producers.

The project will consist of heavier rail, new ties and ballast. Depending upon the price of rail when the project is constructed, the project may extend past Chamberlain to Presho.

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